

Chester J. Culver
Iowa Secretary of State
Statehouse
Des Moines, IA 50319



E-MAIL ADDRESS:
sos@sos.state.ia.us

WEBSITE ADDRESS:
www.sos.state.ia.us

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
November 9, 2005

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
John Hedgecoth 515-281-7041

Secretary of State's Office Limits Access to Lien Information to Protect Iowans' Privacy

DES MOINES, IA - The Iowa Secretary of State's Office has implemented a four-digit PIN system to restrict access to information contained on personal, non-business Uniform Commercial Code lien filings with the office.

The change became effective Monday, November 7, 2005, is part of an ongoing privacy project within the Secretary of State's Office aimed at removing personal identification information from public viewing on the internet. Personal social security numbers have never been a required part of the UCC-1 filing in Iowa. However, some lenders have placed this information on such filings.

The UCC-1 is a standard commercial form used to identify priority secured creditors who have perfected their security interest by central filing with the Secretary of State. The documents are important public filings used to identify lienholders. Lenders use the information on a daily basis, with the online business center servicing about 40,000 web hits per month. Access to UCC-1 information is a lynchpin of the financial services industry in Iowa, whether in business, personal or agricultural lending.

In May, the office implemented a policy of notifying all UCC filers that personal identification information is discouraged on the UCC-1. All such filings that used the most recent version of the UCC-1 form, those filed between July 2001 and the present, were redacted before being scanned for placement on the Secretary of State's online business center website. More than 135,000 documents were hand-reviewed by office staff between May and August, with personal identification information being removed before the information was posted on the web. Additionally, for several years, any UCC filings made by electronic filing have not contained social security numbers.

The privacy project was detailed in a letter to the Ombudsman's office on April 28, 2005 after concerns were raised by that office about the online business center. The additional

encryption step is being taken now to protect private information while the Secretary of State's office undertakes the massive project of redaction of personal social security numbers on every UCC-1 document imaged within the office's electronic database. There are approximately 371,000 such filings that remain to be reviewed, many of which are amendments or continuation statements that involve the same debtor.

Because the lien forms are public documents, the Secretary of State urges lenders who complete UCC-1 forms not to include Social Security Numbers, Taxpayer Identification Numbers or Employer ID Numbers as part of the filing. Such numbers are not a required part of the filing.

Full, unrestricted access to the website will be restored when the redaction project is complete. All UCC documents remain a public record and are available at the Lucas Building or by calling 515-281-5274.

The online business center remains in operation. Users may request a four-digit PIN number and set up an access account with the office at http://www.sos.state.ia.us/UCC_Search/UCC_Search.asp

#